

**OPINION 2211 (Case 3360)****The ichnogenus *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 (Ichnotaxa, COPRINISPHAERIDAE): generic name given precedence over *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939**

**Abstract.** The name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955, for an ichnogenus attributed to dung-beetle brood balls (ichnofamily COPRINISPHAERIDAE), was threatened by a rarely used senior subjective synonym *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939. The universally accepted name *Coprinisphaera* has been conserved by giving it precedence over *Fontanai*. The name *Fontanai* was not suppressed as ichnotaxonomy is at a stage of structural typology and the name should remain available for future refined work on ichnotaxa.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; ichnofossils; COPRINISPHAERIDAE; *Coprinisphaera*; *Fontanai*; *Coprinisphaera ecuadoriensis*; dung-beetle brood balls; Ecuador; Uruguay; Eocene–Holocene.

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**Ruling**

- (1) Under the plenary power it is hereby ruled that the name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 is given precedence over the name *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.
- (2) The name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 (gender: feminine), type ichnospecies by monotypy *Coprinisphaera ecuadoriensis* Sauer, 1955, is hereby placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.
- (3) The name *ecuadoriensis* Sauer, 1955, as published in the binomen *Coprinisphaera ecuadoriensis* (specific name of the type ichnospecies of *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955), is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

**History of Case 3360**

An application to conserve the universally accepted name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 for an ichnogenus attributed to dung-beetle brood balls (ichnofamily COPRINISPHAERIDAE) was received from J.F. Genise and J.H. Laza (*Conicet, Museo Paleontológico Egidio Feruglio, Chubut, Argentina*) and A.K. Rindsberg (*University of West Alabama, Livingston, Alabama, U.S.A.*) on 20 September 2005. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 63: 243–246 (December 2006). The title, abstract and keywords were published on the Commission's website. A comment with an alternative set of proposals was published in BZN 65: 50–54. The authors of the case agreed with the alternative set of proposals in a comment published in BZN 65: 51.

**Decision of the Commission**

On 1 June 2008 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 65: 51. At the close of the voting period on 1 September 2008 the votes were as follows:



Affirmative votes – 16: Alonso-Zarazaga, Bogutskaya, Brothers, Fautin, Grygier, Halliday, Kottelat, Krell, Kullander, Lamas, Lim, Pape, Papp, Rosenberg, van Tol and Zhang.

Negative vote – 1: Bouchet.

Minelli, Ng, Patterson, Pyle and Štys were on leave of absence.

Voting against the proposal, Bouchet said he understood the science behind, and sympathised with the proposals set out by F. Krell (BZN 65: 51). However, he believed that nomenclature should have rules that were as simple as possible. ‘Conditional’ reversal of precedence was a source of instability and thus he rejected it through his vote. When ichnotaxonomy needs another name for dung-beetle brood ball-like structures, Bouchet suggested we make a new one rather than keep *Fontanai* in store (which looked like a specific epithet in genitive). He would have voted for the proposals in BZN 63: 244. Voting for the proposal, Kullander said that the comment (BZN 65: 51) gave a better informed explanation on why the name *Coprinisphaera* deserved to live on. The name *Fontanai* Roselli is not placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology because it should not be used as a valid genus-group name at present.

### Original references

The following are the original references to the names placed on Official Lists by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

*Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955, *Boletín del Instituto de Ciencias Naturales del Ecuador*, 1(2): 123.  
*ecuadoriensis*, *Coprinisphaera*, Sauer, 1955, *Boletín del Instituto de Ciencias Naturales del Ecuador*, 1(2): 123.